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ADDRESS

OF

HON. J. M. ASHLEY,

AT THE

FOURTH ANNUAL BANQUET

OF THE

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OHIO REPUBLICAN LEAGUE,

HELD AT

MEMORIAL HALL,

TOLEDO, OHIO,

FEBRUARY 12, 1891.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

EVENING POST JOB PRINT, BROADWAY AND FULTON ST., N. Y.

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Toastmaster: Gen. WM. H. GIBSON, Tiffin, Ohio.

First Toast:

ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

" How humble, yet how hopeful he could be;
How in good fortune and in ill the same;
Nor bitter in success, nor boastful he,
Thirsty for gold, nor feverish for fame."

Response by

Hon. J. M. ASHLEY, Toledo, Ohio.

MR. PRESIDENT AND LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

At Alton, Illinois, in October, 1858, I first met Abraham Lincoln. It was on the day he closed the historic joint debate of that year, with Stephen A. Douglas.

My anxiety to see and hear the man whose great speech at Springfield in June had electrified the entire country was so intense that immediately after our election in Ohio I ran down over the Wabash, and saw and heard Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Douglas in their closing debate at Alton.

I returned home at once, so as to be present and celebrate my first election to Congress.

I had accepted an invitation from the Republican Committee of Illinois to accompany Governor Chase and speak at several points in that State and remain until the close of the campaign in November.

The plan for the Illinois campaign was discussed and agreed upon at the Tremont House in Chicago. Here we met John Wentworth, Elihu B. Washburn, Owen Lovejoy and Joseph Medill (then as now, editor of the Chicago *Tribune*) and many others.

This was a memorable meeting, and from that hour Mr. Lincoln's nomination for the Presidency in 1860 became a probability.

I gave this meeting an enthusiastic account of the debate at Alton, and when I stated that although the present campaign might not result in the election of Mr. Lincoln as Senator, yet his speeches had made it impossible for Mr. Douglas to be elected President, and that a great leader had arisen, I commanded the attention of eager listeners.

Mr. Lincoln came to Ohio in the fall of 1859 to take part in the Gubernatorial campaign, and delivered memorable speeches at Columbus and Cincinnati. Under the leadership of Judge Swayne a distinct Lincoln party arose in Ohio, which in a few months became a great factor in Mr. Lincoln's nomination for the Presidency.

NORTHERN PRO-SLAVERY CHAMPIONS.

From 1844 until 1861 the slave-barons were so entrenched in the Government that they demanded as a condition to the political recognition of any Northern leader that they publicly commit themselves by deeds as well as words to their service. They demanded that all Northern aspirants to the Presidency should, in addition to their general subserviency, give undoubted evidence of their fidelity and fitness for so exalted a position, by causing to be captured and returned to the South any fugitive slaves who might be found in the cities of their residence.

Whereupon, the partisans of Filmore, then the acting President, who after approving the fugitive slave bill was intriguing for the Whig presidential nomination in 1852, caused the officials of Filmore's own appointment to seize at his home in Buffalo and return a fugitive slave in order that the slave-barons might know that their recently enacted slave-catching law could be executed in the city of Filmore's residence, and so executed that they could be eye-witnesses to the subserviency of their allies, who everywhere in that day abounded throughout the North. The manner in which that disgraceful act was performed at Buffalo was so shocking in its brutality, that after Filmore's retirement from the Presidency he drifted into obscurity and died unwept and unlamented.

Webster's friends in Boston joined with alacrity

in sending Sims back to slavery, hoping by this shameful act of abasement to commend their great political idol to the slave-barons for President. He did not get a single vote from them in the nominating convention, and soon afterwards retired to his home in Marshfield and saw, as did Belshazzar of old, the handwriting on the wall. Wherever he turned his eyes there appeared the sentence of doom, as out of the darkness came the hand with index finger pointing to the words, "The 7th of March."

Mr. Webster died a disappointed and humiliated man, with the personal knowledge that the slave-barons could be as exacting and false to him as to one of their own bondmen.

The pulpit was but little, if any, behind in its base subserviency. A fire-bell at night could not empty a fashionable church in Boston or New York quicker than it would then have been emptied if its parson had honestly prayed or preached for the liberation of the slave. So debasing and brutal was this infernal spirit, that the Rev. Dr. Dewey, of Boston, publicly declared "that if the Constitution required it, he would send his own mother back into slavery." And yet, this self-righteous worshiper of Mammon and the Constitution claimed to be an American citizen and a descendant of the Puritans!

After such a statement of our moral condition as a nation, you will not be surprised when I tell you that this reverend individual was but an exaggerated type of a whole generation of vipers, who, in 1861, rolled up their eyes in holy horror, and demanded peace at any price and our absolute submission to the terms of the slave-barons; everywhere crying out: "Give us the Constitution as it is, and the Union as it was." And many so-called statesmen in the North lifted up their voices in chorus and wept and said—Amen.

MR. LINCOLN, AS HE APPEARED ON THE PLAINS OF ILLINOIS.

I present you this dark and sad picture in order that I may show you more distinctly the colossal form and plain but manly face of Abraham Lincoln. Behold him, as at the tomb of the martyred Lovejoy and on the plains of Illinois he emerges unheralded from the shadow of this national degradation and national dishonor, and with the words of truth and soberness on his lips, proclaims: "A house divided against itself cannot stand." "I believe this Government cannot endure permanently, half slave and half free." That was the keynote which touched the hearts and anointed the eyes of millions. It was in that dark hour the fitly spoken word, and like an eternal ray of light it illuminated the dim and shadowy future.

THE LINCOLN-DOUGLAS JOINT DEBATES.

In this spirit, and on this elevated moral plane, Mr. Lincoln met Mr. Douglas and conducted his great campaign in Illinois, and successfully drove him from every controverted position. Subsequently, in his desperation, Mr. Douglas declared "that he did not care whether slavery was voted up or voted down."

Mr. Lincoln did care, the great heart of the nation cared, every honest man in the world cared whether slavery was voted up or voted down. And when I heard Mr. Lincoln proclaim at Alton "that it was a question between right and wrong," his face glowed as if tinged with a halo, and to me he looked the prophet of hope and joy, when with dignity and emphasis he said: "That is the real issue. That is the issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall be silent. It is the eternal struggle between these two principles, right and wrong, throughout the world. They are the two principles that have

stood face to face from the beginning of time, and will ever continue to struggle, until the common right of humanity shall ultimately triumph."

The tongues of these two men have been silent for a quarter of a century. The one who did care "whether slavery was voted up or voted down" will live in the grateful remembrance of his countrymen and mankind; while he who declared "that he did not care" will only be remembered as the man whom Abraham Lincoln defeated for President.

RESULT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN 1860.

Two years after his defeat for Senator, Mr. Lincoln was nominated and elected President, receiving 180 electoral votes and Judge Douglas but 12 electoral votes. Breckinridge of Kentucky received 72 votes, and Bell of Tennessee 39 votes.

If Mr. Lincoln had not received a majority of all the electoral votes cast, the choice of a President would, as provided by that indefensible and anti-democratic provision of our Constitution, have devolved on the House of Representatives, each State having one vote (except where the Congressional delegation was equally divided), in which event its vote would be lost. The choice of a President at that time by the House would have been limited to either Lincoln, Breckinridge or Bell. The conspirators put Breckinridge electoral tickets in the Northern States with the deliberate purpose of excluding Douglas from the three highest, and thus keeping him out of the contest in the House.

An election by the House of Representatives of a President for 1860-61 was part of the original programme of the conspirators when they deliberately divided the Democratic party at Charleston and Baltimore and determined to defeat Douglas. Nothing is more certain, had that election gone into the House of Representatives, than

that Mr. Lincoln would not have been chosen President, as the Republicans could not have commanded the votes of a sufficient number of States to elect him.

With Mr. Buchanan in the President's office, to obey the orders of the conspirators until they had accomplished their purpose, the result would have been a so-called compromise and the election of Breckinridge.

In the light of all that has happened, no mortal man can even now presage what would have been the ultimate result had Breckinridge at that time been clothed with the power of the Presidential office.

That this country would have become a consolidated slave empire during the administration of Breckinridge is more than probable. The pro-slavery amendment to our National Constitution, which was submitted by the Northern compromisers of the Thirty-sixth Congress (and ratified by the vote of Ohio), would have been engrafted into the National Constitution, and slavery thus entrenched could not have been abolished except by the consent of every State, thus practically making slavery constitutional and perpetual, with no remedy for its abolition but armed revolution. Fortunately for the future of the Republic, Mr. Lincoln's election defeated this deeply laid plot of the pro-slavery conspirators and their subsequent mad rebellion, and war on the Union enabled him and the National Congress to abolish slavery and make the nation *all free instead of all slave*.

From the day of Mr. Lincoln's inauguration until the tragic close of his eventful life, no one who did not know and often see him can portray the tremendous mental and physical strain under which he labored, nor can human tongue describe the innumerable petty annoyances to which he was subjected, nor the intrigues and conspiracies which he encountered and mastered.

MR. LINCOLN AND THE RADICAL WING OF THE REPUBLICAN PARTY.

While Mr. Lincoln was, beyond all question, as deeply impressed with the necessity of saving the Union as any one of the great men with whom I served, there were often radical differences of opinion as to the best means to be adopted to that end. This was in large part the result of early political training and political affiliation of the men, who were leaders in the Republican party.

The advanced or radical wing of the Republican party was made up largely of men who had been the recognized leaders of the anti-slavery wing of the Democratic party. Such men as Rantoul, Sumner and Boutwell, of Massachusetts; Hannibal Hamlin, of Maine; Hale, of New Hampshire; David Wilmot, of Pennsylvania; General Dix and Governor Fenton, of New York; Chase and others in Ohio; Julian, of Indiana; Trumbull, of Illinois; Doolittle, of Wisconsin; Bingham and Beaman, of Michigan; Frank P. Blair and Gratz Brown, of Missouri, and many others whom I need not name.

These men were all trained in the school of Jefferson, and our personal and political affiliations had been with the anti-slavery wing of the Democratic party.

Mr. Lincoln had been trained in the old Whig party, and Henry Clay, its great compromising chief, was his early political leader, and he voted for General Scott for President in 1852, notwithstanding the platform on the subject of slavery. I voted that year for Hale and Julian, because of the offensive Democratic platform, which was no more objectionable than that of the Whigs.

I have not read either of those platforms since 1852, but if young students of political history will go into any library and read them they will be

found practically duplicates, and so subservient to the slave-barons, as to make the cheek of every true American blush with shame to-day.

When Mr. Lincoln came into the Presidency he had not advanced as far beyond the old party platforms as Sumner and Chase, Hale and Wilmot, and the men who had crossed the Rubicon and voted for Hale and Julian in 1852. But within two years he was abreast of them, and before the close of his life they recognized him as their leader.

What wonder, then, that at the outset our differences with Mr. Lincoln should have been marked and pronounced on some of the most important questions which confronted us?

We were disappointed, to begin with, in the make up of his Cabinet. I wanted Fessenden of Maine, or Collamer of Vermont, for Secretary of State, Governor Morgan of New York or Zack Chandler of Michigan, for Secretary of the Treasury, Edwin M. Stanton of Ohio, for Secretary of War, Henry Winter Davis of Maryland, for Secretary of the Navy, George W. Summers of West Virginia, for Secretary of the Interior, James Speed of Kentucky, Postmaster-General, and Edmund Bates of Missouri, for Attorney-General.

These men were all old line Whigs, except Mr. Stanton, and not one of the border slave States had voted for Mr. Lincoln. I proposed, as a matter of expediency, to strengthen the Union sentiment in the border slave States by loading their conservative Union Whig leaders with the honors and patronage of the Government. And then, I did not think it expedient to take Seward or Chase or Cameron out of the Senate.

Instead of 75,000 men for three months, I wanted the call issued for 500,000 men for the war. Instead of committing ourselves in any way on the question of slavery and the status of slaves, we thought that the proclamation should simply promise that all per-

sons who were loyal to the Government and gave it their support should receive the protection of the Government. I wanted the war to be conducted strictly according to the laws of war, and the army to be moved not in conformity with party platforms or the decree of any court, which might be presided over by some timid or disloyal judge. I wanted the writ of habeas corpus suspended wherever, within the jurisdiction of the United States, the local police authorities could not enforce the law, and the public safety required it. In short, I wanted the war conducted as if we were in earnest, and determined to preserve the Union at whatever cost; and I believed then, as we all believe now, that the only way at that time to secure an enduring peace was to destroy the slave power and make such a rebellion forever impossible in the future.

The entire radical wing of the party were opposed to the authority which Mr. Lincoln assumed to re-organize the rebel State governments. Our discussions on this subject were often set and sharp. We finally told him that if he attempted to carry out his programme without the consent or approval of Congress, that the House of Representatives would refuse to count the electoral votes even if they should be cast for him by Tennessee and Louisiana, and we did so refuse to permit their votes to be counted.

And yet, through all these earnest discussions, sometimes waxing warm, as they of necessity did, there never was any estrangement between us, nor an unkind act to be recalled or regretted.

MR. LINCOLN'S MENTAL CONSTITUTION.

There was in Mr. Lincoln's mental constitution a marvelous blending of sunshine and shadow, of earnestness and innocent fun, of profound thought

and delightful humor, of hopeful prophecy and inexorable logic.

In estimating the mental and moral qualities of any man of mark, it is due to him, not less than to ourselves, that we form a rational judgment by a careful analysis of all the peculiar traits and moods which go so largely to make up the life and character of every such man.

This analysis I made for myself when Mr. Lincoln was President, and while I shall express freely and frankly my deliberately formed opinion of Mr. Lincoln's character, I will be warranted in presenting a few of his striking utterances and well authenticated acts, so that you may form an independent opinion for yourselves.

Before such an assembly and on an occasion like this, I may properly relate two or three occurrences which will illustrate the masterly manner in which he managed all kinds and conditions of men.

THE WAY MR. LINCOLN MANAGED MR. GREELEY.

During the war the number of volunteer peace negotiators who made pilgrimages to Washington, and occupied the time of Mr. Lincoln and members of Congress, were legion.

This brigade of budding Talleyrands was made up largely of peace cranks, Confederate sympathizers, gentlemen ambitious of distinguishing themselves by playing the role of mediators, and all sorts and conditions of political schemers, who kept the President, and all public men in Washington who would listen to them, awake at night, as they poured into their unwilling ears their visionary schemes.

It was a time for fighting and supplying the sinews of war to our armies, and not for the game of diplomacy, except so far as such diplomacy tended to support armies in the field and maintain peace abroad until treason was destroyed at home.

We were particularly anxious that no act should be done by the President which, by any possibility, could be distorted by European nations into a recognition of the Confederate Government.

Mr. Greeley was one of those who had worried the President by insisting on opening negotiations with the Confederate Commissioners at Niagara Falls, with the view of securing an early peace.

The world and Mr. Greeley were alike surprised one morning by the public announcement that the President had authorized Mr. Greeley to proceed to Niagara Falls and see what he could do as an apostle of peace. This was a "commission" which Mr. Greeley did not expect and had not sought. But, after all he had said and written, he could not very well decline it. Everybody was up in arms against intrusting any one with such a mission, and of all other men the guileless philosopher of the *Tribune*. Of course, I was among the first at the White House to protest. Mr. Lincoln explained to me why he did it, and added, "Don't you worry; nothing will come of it," and there did not. Mr. Greeley accomplished nothing, and was supremely disgusted with himself for what he had said and done in the matter of peace negotiations at Niagara Falls, and never again troubled the President in that direction.

This humorous stroke of diplomacy on the part of Mr. Lincoln nipped in the bud the ambitious schemes of scores of would-be negotiators, and gave him and all public men at Washington comparative peace from their importunities.

JULIAN'S STORY OF LOVEJOY AND STANTON.

Mr. Lincoln's manner of dealing with men of fiery temperaments is well illustrated in a story told by Hon. George W. Julian, of Indiana, in a magazine article some four or five years ago. Mr. Lovejoy of Illinois, at the head of some self-appointed com-

mittee, had called on the President, and after explaining the scheme which they had in hand, looking to an increase in the efficiency of the Western soldiers, procured an order from Mr. Lincoln on the Secretary of War for its execution. Lovejoy and his committee repaired at once to the War Department, and after explaining the matter, Mr. Stanton peremptorily refused to comply with it. "But," said the impulsive Lovejoy, "we have the President's order here with us, sir." "Did Lincoln give you an order of that kind?" roared the irate Secretary. "He did, sir," answered Lovejoy. "Then he is a damned fool," said the fiery Stanton. "Do you mean to say that the President is a damned fool?" asked the bewildered Lovejoy. "Yes," again roared the Secretary, "if he gave you such an order as that." The amazed Congressman and his committee immediately returned to the White House and reported in full the result of their visit.

"Did Stanton say I was a damned fool?" asked the President, and Lovejoy and his committee joined in affirming that he did. After a moment or two, the President said, "Well, gentlemen, if Stanton said I was a damned fool, there must be something wrong about this, for Stanton is nearly always right. I must see the Secretary about it before anything can be done." Only a great man could have so borne himself.

NASBY QUOTED ON ASHLEY.

On no one subject did we disagree with Mr. Lincoln so radically as that of reconstruction. It was a subject ever present with me, from the day I laid before my committee the first reconstruction bill which I drew up at the extra session of Congress in July, 1861.

I assumed from the first that we should put down the rebellion, and that the question of questions

would be the reorganization of constitutional governments in the seceded States as a condition to their representation in Congress.

Had Mr. Lincoln lived, I believe he would eventually have adopted the views held by a majority of the Republicans in Congress.

After an unusually long and warm discussion one morning on this subject, I rose to go, quite dissatisfied with the result of my interview and exhibiting a little more feeling than I ought, when the President called out, and said: "Ashley, that was a great speech you made out in Ohio the other day." I turned, and, I fear with some irritation in both manner and voice, said: "I have made no speech anywhere, Mr. President, and have not been out of Washington." He laughed and said: "Well, I see Nasby says that in consequence of one speech made by Jim Ashley, four hundred thousand niggers moved into Wood County last week, and it must have taken a great speech to do that." Of course I joined in the laugh, and then Mr. Lincoln, in his kindly manner, said: "Come up soon, Ashley, and we will take up reconstruction again."

By the gentlest of methods this great leader held together all the discordant elements in the Republican party, both in Congress and the country.

JUDGE HOLMAN'S TESTIMONY.

I could relate from personal knowledge incidents which would illustrate his unaffected simplicity and tenderness. But instead of telling one of my own I will relate one that is fresher to me, and may be to you. I read it on the cars while on my way home. It was told only a day or two ago by Judge Holman, of Indiana, long a leading Democratic member of Congress, and one of the best men with whom I served. This is his testimony:

"I can see how Lincoln erred on the side of humanity. His nature was essentially humane. That was the charm of his character. But he was an able man, too. You ask me if I have not seen a good many men like Lincoln in southern Indiana and Illinois. I at first thought I should say yes, that I knew four or five, but not one of these, though he may have had a superficial resemblance to Lincoln, had anything of Lincoln's reality. He was such a plain person that people often misconceived him and thought him to be artful. He was polite, but his plainness was also a genuine endowment. I recall when I went to see him about a boy, the son of a postmaster, who had opened a letter, and in it was some money and he took the money. His parents were overwhelmed with shame and sorrow, for the boy had never done anything wrong before. Judge Sweet of our State sent by me to Mr. Lincoln an appeal for the boy's pardon. It seems that under the war pressure they had been in the habit in that post office of opening the mails to see what the rebels on the Kentucky shore were about. The boy had seen them open the letters of other people, and the example had infected him, and this letter having some money in it he took the money from fright or from some other reason. I went to Mr. Lincoln, and he said: 'Sweet is an awful rebel, but Sweet is an honest man if there ever was one. I know his handwriting. He is a bad rebel, but he won't tell a lie. If Sweet says that this boy ought to be pardoned, I reckon it will have to be so.' So he pardoned the boy. Now, a man from my part of the world could understand that to be natural and not artful. Lincoln was able, shrewd, but above all tender."

THE WADE AND DAVIS MANIFESTO.

The first time I called at the White House, after Senator Wade and Henry Winter Davis issued their celebrated manifesto against Mr. Lincoln, the President, as he advanced to take my hand, said: "Ashley, I am glad to see by the papers that you refused to sign the Wade and Davis manifesto." "Yes, Mr. President," I answered, "I could not do that," and added, for

"Close as sin and suffering joined
We march to fate abreast."

It was a picture as we thus stood, my lips quivering with emotion, while tears stood in the eyes of both.

On many occasions during the darkest hours of our great conflict men who were in accord were often in such close touch with each other that each could feel the pulse-beat of the other's heart.

This incident tells its own story. Mr. Lincoln regarded both Mr. Wade and Mr. Davis as able and honest men, and he knew they were my warm personal friends. He also knew that nothing but a sense of public duty could have separated me from them. No one regretted their mistake more than I did; and, knowing my close relations to them, Mr. Lincoln did not hesitate to speak to me of their mistake in the kindest spirit.

THE EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION.

Eighteen hundred and sixty-two was like 1890, an off year for Republicans. After my election in 1862, I was invited by telegraph to come to Washington. When I called on the President, he congratulated me on my triumph, and said: "How did you do it?" I answered, "It was your emancipation proclamation, Mr. President, that did it." In a few moments he said, "Well, how do you like the proclamation?" I answered that I liked it as far as it went, and added, "but, Mr. President, if I had been Commander-in-Chief, I should not have given the enemy one hundred days' notice of my purpose to strike him, at the expiration of that time, in his most vulnerable point, nor would I have offered any apology for doing so great and noble an act." He laughed and enjoyed my hit, and after a moment's pause said, "Ashley, that's a centre shot."

MR. LINCOLN AT HAMPTON ROADS.

No one event during the entire War of the Rebellion alarmed us so much as the meeting at Hampton Roads, between Alexander H. Stephens, R. M. T. Hunter and Judge Campbell, formerly of our United States Supreme Court, and the President and Mr. Seward.

The night I learned that "Blair's scheme," as it was called, was about to be attempted, I went to the White House and protested against it. When it became known that Mr. Seward had actually gone down to Hampton Roads alone, every loyal man in Washington was white with indignation, and the demand was made that the President should go down at once unless Mr. Seward was recalled. Mr. Lincoln went down, and again nothing was done. Mr. Lincoln successfully handled the wily Confederate Commissioners at this meeting—put them thoroughly in the wrong, and so defeated their last desperate effort to extricate themselves from the fate that all men of judgment then knew to be inevitable if the Union men of the nation but did their duty.

Before Mr. Lincoln started for Hampton Roads he said to a friend of mine "that nothing would come of it," and when he returned to Washington we knew that the end of the Confederacy was near, and that the Union was to remain unbroken.

Constitutionally cautious, and by political training a conservative, Mr. Lincoln nevertheless kept abreast of public opinion, and in his last annual message to Congress announced with a clearness of statement which could not be misinterpreted, and with an impressiveness befitting the dignity of his great office, that—

"In presenting the abandonment of armed resistance to national authority on the part of the insur-

gents as the only indispensable condition to ending the war on the part of the Government, I retract nothing heretofore said as to slavery. I repeat the declaration made a year ago, that while I remain in my present position I shall not attempt to retract or modify the emancipation proclamation, nor shall I return to slavery any person who is free by the terms of that proclamation or by any of the acts of Congress.

"If the people should, by whatever mode or means, make it an executive duty to re-enslave such persons, another, and not I, must be the instrument to perform it."

GREAT EVENTS DEVELOP GREAT MEN.

Seldom in the history of mankind have great men produced great events. It is great events which develop great men. But for the rebellion our matchless generals, Grant and Thomas, Sherman and Sheridan, would have been unknown in history as great soldiers, and not one nor all of them could have produced such a rebellion. But for that attempted revolution scores of men in civil life who will appear in history as among our leading statesmen would in all probability have been unknown in the councils of the Republic; they would have passed their lives in domestic or business pursuits had not the opportunity been given them of service in the great conflict for saving the nation's life. And Mr. Lincoln himself had not that kind of leadership which could conspire and plot and surround himself with followers to inaugurate a revolution. He was pre-eminently fitted by nature to be the representative of law and order, to group and bind together all citizens of the Republic who were desirous of peace and union, and to preserve liberty and constitutional government. As an historical figure he was, in fact, a product of the great anti-slavery revolution of which he became the recognized leader. But for

the slave-baron's rebellion it might never have been his lot.

"The applause of listning Senates to command;
The threats of pain and ruin to despise;
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,
And read his history in a nation's eyes."

MR. LINCOLN AS EXECUTIVE, DIPLOMAT AND MILITARY COMMANDER.

Mr. President :

It was my privilege in boyhood and early manhood to meet and to know a number of the able statesmen of this country who were in power prior to the War of the Rebellion.

During my service in Congress I came to know more intimately the men who were in public life during the Presidency of Mr. Lincoln, and I often compared them with the idols of my boyhood. I need not tell you that I am better able now to judge character than I was then, and to compare them with Mr. Lincoln.

As an Executive, charged with the care and responsibility of a great government during the War of the Rebellion, and with the organization and direction of great armies, he was, as I estimate men, an abler and safer President than Webster or Clay, or Chase or Seward would have been under like conditions and surrounded by like environments.

As a diplomat, he was the superior of Talleyrand, for without duplicity or falsehood he moulded, and conquered with truth as his weapon and candor for his defensive armor.

As a military strategist and commander, he was the equal, if not the superior, of his great generals.

As a man, he was merciful and just and absolutely without pride or arrogance; and to crown all, there

was an atmosphere surrounding his daily life which made friendships that last beyond the grave.

“He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.”

JACKSON ON HORSEBACK AND LINCOLN ON FOOT.

During the last half of the first century of the Republic two men filled the Presidential office whose personality stands out pre-eminently conspicuous above those who immediately preceded or followed them in that office. Every one who hears me will know to whom I refer before I can pronounce the names of Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln.

Both Southern born, they were unquestionably the two most striking figures of their day and generation. And yet how unlike.

As I read history, Andrew Jackson was the *first* of our Presidents who appeared booted and spurred and on horseback; and though his term of office was in a time of profound peace, he ruled his country and his party with an iron hand and the autocratic will of a crowned king.

Abraham Lincoln came into the Presidency on the eve of the greatest rebellion in history, and though Commander-in-Chief of the mightiest army then in the world, and practically clothed with unlimited power, he did not magnify himself, nor attempt to rule with military rigor either his country or his party.

On the contrary, he sought to *know* the will of his countrymen with no thought of party or self. He sought to know their will so that he might administer the government as the general judgment of the nation should indicate, but, nevertheless, in accord with the promptings of his own great heart, which demanded that it should be administered in justice and mercy, “with charity for all and malice towards none.”

The thought that dominated him was his earnest desire to conform his acts to the considerate judgment of all loyal men, and thus be able the better to discharge the duties of his great office, preserve the Government unimpaired and secure its perpetual unity and peace by enacting into constitutional law the legitimate results of the war.

For a moment let there pass in review before your mind's eye the picture of Andrew Jackson as President entering Richmond after the close of the great rebellion (especially if Calhoun had been at the head of the defeated Confederate Government), and then recall the manner in which every one knows that Abraham Lincoln entered it.

There can be no doubt that Jackson would have entered it duly heralded and on horseback amid the booming of cannon, the waiving of banners, and surrounded by his victorious army, marching to the music of fife and drum.

Those who have read of Jackson's imperious will and fiery temper know that the conquered would have been made to feel and remember the iron hand and iron will of the conqueror.

You all remember how Mr. Lincoln entered Richmond, on foot, unheralded and practically unattended. He thus entered the Capital of the late Confederate Government to teach the South and the nation a needed lesson—the lesson of mercy and forgiveness.

If he could, he would have entered Richmond bearing aloft the nation's banner "unstained by human blood." As he walked up the silent and deserted streets of Richmond the colored people were the only ones to meet him, and they gave their great deliverer a timid, quiet and undemonstrative welcome by standing on each side of the streets through which he passed with uncovered heads. During his walk of nearly two miles the colored children, after a time, drew nearer to him, and at last a little girl came so

close that he took the child by the hand and spoke kindly to it, obeying the injunction of that simple and sublime utterance, which touches all human hearts: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."

As I look back and recall many of the wonderful acts of this wonderful man, this was, to me, one among the most impressive and touching, and to-night presents to my mind a picture of moral grandeur, such as the world never before looked upon, a scene such as the future can only witness when like causes reproduce such an occasion—and such a man.

" Ah, if in coming times
Some giant evil arise,
And honor falter and pale,
His were a name to conjure with!
God send his like again!"

As the colossal figure of Lincoln casts its shadow down the centuries, it will be a guide to all coming generations, inspiring, as it did, with courage and hope all loyal men during the darkest hours of the great struggle for our national life, when he—

" Faithful stood with prophet finger
Pointing toward the blessed to be,
When beneath the spread of Heaven
Every creature shall be free.

" Fearless when the lips of evil
Breathed their blackness on his name,
Trusting in a noble life time
For a spotless after fame."

And his contemporaries, while they live, and his countrymen for all time, will cherish the thought that neither time nor distance, nor things present, nor things to come, can dim the halo which surrounds and glorifies the unselfish and manly life of Abraham Lincoln.

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